



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE  
Northeast Fisheries Science Center  
166 Water Street  
Woods Hole, MA 02543-1026

June 17, 2010

MEMORANDUM FOR: All NEFOP Observers

FROM: Amy S. Van Atten  
Branch Chief, FSB

SUBJECT: River Herring Sample Request

Researchers from Duke University, in conjunction with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation have requested samples of river herring (Blueback Herring, Alewife). The goal of their study is to map bycaught herring back to their natal origins, with the hopes of pinpointing the fish to the exact river in which they were spawned, using genetic and otolith geochemical markers. They wish to determine which herring runs are impacted most by bycatch events, and where those events occur.

In the event that there is river herring bycatch on a haul, observers are asked to retain whole samples, bagged and tagged according to standard biological sample tag protocols, and frozen as soon as possible. On the tag, write "River Herring Bycatch" to ensure the samples do not get mixed up with regular samples sent in for species ID or training purposes. Also, it is very important to record the haul number of which the bycatch event occurred, so that specific location and date information may be obtained, as this pertains directly to the study. Remember to record the samples as disposition code 007 (no market, but retained by observer for science purposes) on your haul log. Multiple samples from the same haul may be bagged together, and you are encouraged to collect as many per haul as is reasonable.

Sample collecting may begin immediately, and will run for a period of three years. At the end of the project, you will be alerted either via phone or email that sampling may cease.

If you have any questions, or to request more supplies (bags, tags), you may contact Christopher Tholke at 508-495-2210 or [ctholke@mercury.wh.who.edu](mailto:ctholke@mercury.wh.who.edu).

